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Mr. O L I V E R'S
S E R M O N
AT THE
E L E C T I O N
OF THE
L O R D - M A Y O R, 1726.

⊕

Forbes Mayor.

*Cur' Special' tent' in Festo Sⁿⁱ
Michaelis Archangeli, scil^{icet}
Jovis xxix^o die Septembris,
1726. Annoq; Regni Regis
Georgii, Magnæ Britan-
niæ, &c. Decimo tertio.*



IT is ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Rev^d Mr. Oliver, for his Sermon this Day Preached before this Court and the Liveries of the several Companies of this City, at the Parish-Church of S^t Laurence Jewry, before the Election of the Lord Mayor for the Year ensuing: And that he be desired to Print the same.

JACKSON.

The Relative Duties of MAGISTRATE *and* PEOPLE.

A ✓
S E R M O N

PREACHED at

S^t Laurence Jewry, LONDON;

September 29. 1726.

Being the Day of

E L E C T I O N

O F T H E

L O R D - M A Y O R.

By EDWARD OLIVER, B. D., Rector
of *S^t Mary Ab-Church*, and Prebendary of *S^t Paul's*.

✍
L O N D O N: K

Printed by *George James*, for JONAH BOWYER,
at the *Rose* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, M DCC XXVI.

REVEREND

St Lawrence, Jersey LGNDON

September 29, 1756.

REFLECTION

WHAT



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

of St Mary Abchurch, and Treasury of St Paul's.

END

Printed by George James, for Jonathan Bowyer,
at the Rose in Pall-mall-Road. MDCCLXXVI.

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TO the RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir FRANCIS FORBES, Kn^t

L O R D - M A Y O R.

MY LORD,

THIS Discourse being first Preach'd,
and now Printed by Your Command,
waits on Your Lordship to be protected by
the same Authority.

The Design of it being to inculcate Obedi-
ence to the Higher Powers, it would ill
have become me to have disputed any of
Your Commands; especially when I had
so great an Example of the Good Ma-
gistrate in Your Lordship; which I have
so endeavour'd to describe, that the Reader
will soon think I took the Picture from the
Life.

That

DEDICATION.

*That this Great and Honourable City
may never want Magistrates to rule it with
Temper and Candour, with Fidelity and
Impartiality, with Love and Honour, that
is, as You have done, and as we more than
hope your Successor will do, is the hearty
Prayer of,*

MY LORD,

Your most Faithful

Humble Servant,

EDWARD OLIVER.

R O M. xiii.†3.

*For Rulers are not a Terror to good Works,
but to the Evil.*

TH E Apostle having in the 1st Verse prescribed the Duty of Civil Subjection to the Higher or Sovereign Powers, and resolv'd the Origine of all Civil Power into the Institution of God; in the Verse immediately preceding the Text, he shews the Danger of Disobedience in the Subjects, especially when they so far exceed the Bounds of their Duty, as to resist the Authority which they ought and are presumed to obey; *For they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation*; * i. e. They shall be liable to Judgment, or to the Sentence which the Law shall award as due to Rebels and Traitors: So that *Damnation*, indeed, as it refers to the future and final Judgment of God, does not seem so just and proper a Version of the Original Word, as that, simply, of *Judgment*: Tho', as every Sin exposes us to the Wrath of God, especially such as are more directly committed in Contempt of his Power and Authority, by way of pious Accommodation or Inference, they who resist the Civil Powers, instituted and commission'd by God, may justly be said to incur the Wrath and Displeasure of God; and, in consequence, if they die impenitent, to receive to themselves Damnation, or, to become justly obnoxious

* Ἐαντοῖς κείμα λήψονται.

to the Sentence of it. The Words of the Text are added as a farther Reason to enforce the Obedience of Subjects, whether to the Prince or to subordinate Magistrates. For the Ends of Government, the Peace, Happiness and Good of the People, are the same in all Persons invested with Civil Authority, in what Degree soever it is committed to them: And they are all of them guilty of Breach of Trust, if they do not, in their respective Stations, conscientiously and strictly observe and pursue those Ends. Tho' such of them as have a larger Share in the Administration, or are intrusted with a greater Degree of Power, are still more culpable, as being unfaithful to their Trusts in a higher Measure and more dangerous Manner.

What we do here indeed render *Rulers*, Ἀρχοντες, is more properly applicable to Magistrates in the First Posts, or more Honorary and Superior Stations of Government.

And according to this Explication of the Words, I shall consider and apply them in my following Discourse; begging leave, by the way, to obviate an unjust Imputation too commonly thrown on the *Clergy*; as if in prescribing, whether the Duties of the Civil Magistrate, or the Rules of Obedience, to the People, they take too much upon them, or meddle in things too high for them, and out of their proper Sphere.

As to the Duties respecting the Civil Magistrate, provided They, whose Office it is to instruct all Persons in the Principles and Practice of a pure Morality, in all the Parts of it, do confine themselves to such *general Precepts*, to that End, as are laid down in Scripture, or such as the Nature and necessary Ends of Government do in general require should be laid down; certainly such a Method of Instruction in the *Clergy*, is so far from having any thing Criminal in it, that 'tis really matter of strict and indispensable Duty to them.

Neither

Neither are they chargeable on this Account with presuming to dictate to Persons of much superior Understandings and Abilities to them in every thing that relates to the Civil Administration. For notwithstanding this may frequently happen, (and I am very sensible does certainly so happen on the present Occasion) yet the wisest and best of Men (as a very small Observation shews) have sometimes Occasion *to be put in remembrance of those Truths which they habitually know*, and wherein they have been establish'd (2 Pet. i. 12.) or, as the Apostle yet more forcibly expresses it, in the following Verse, *to be stirred up by being put in remembrance*.

As to the Measures of Obedience in the People, there is still greater necessity for *their being instructed*, on Account of their more general and greater Ignorance; and provided our Instructions are regulated by Reason and Prudence, and the Laws of the Community, and at the same time supported by the Authority of Sacred Scripture, they will be so far from giving any Umbrage, or *just* Occasion of Offence to the State, that they may, by the Blessing of God, contribute very much to the Service and Tranquillity of it, by enforcing all the Duties of Civil Obedience, not only *for Wrath*, i. e. from the Fear of Punishment, (whether present or future) *but also for Conscience Sake*, (ver. 5.)

If some of our Order have on certain Occasions discover'd the Effects of too intemperate and imprudent a Zeal in either of the foregoing respects, (as 'tis possible there may be some few Instances of this kind:) If with respect to the Civil Magistrate, they have sometimes advanced Things which tended, interpretatively at least, to arraign his Administration, or that of Persons sent by him to execute the Principal Trusts of it: If, at other times, they have taken upon them

to judge where they were not capable of making a competent Judgment of the secret Springs of Actions in their Superiors, by *intruding into Things which they have not seen*, nor perhaps ought to see, (it being highly requisite to the Ends of Government, that even the most just and honourable Designs of those who govern, should be in many Cases dissembled or conceal'd.) Abuses, I say, of this kind (where they may possibly, tho' we hope they do very rarely, happen in the Discharge of our Ministerial Function) can by no means be either justify'd or excused.

Neither in respect to the Measures of Subjection prescribed to the *People*, do we, or indeed can we, approve such Instructions, which tend, on any Account, or in any Degree, to discharge them from the Duties of Honour, Fidelity, or any proper Act of Homage to the Prince, or to the Principal Ministers commission'd by him: But when, instead of enforcing these Duties, any Doctrines, or the most oblique Insinuations are advanced, tending to promote Sedition, or create any Disturbance in the State, or which may render those who preside at the Helm, of less Significancy or Credit; or when, on the other hand, Subjects are taught to pay a blind Implicit Obedience to their Governors, and give into all their Measures, tho' such as possibly are contrary not only to the Laws, but to the natural Reasons of Equity, and perhaps the standing Maxims of Political Prudence: These Abuses of our Character, and the Ends for which we are invested with it, on the Side of either Extreme, are too flagrant to have any thing said in Defence, or to the least Mitigation of them.

I shall endeavour what I can, in the following Discourse, to avoid both these Extremes, and every thing that may have an Appearance of approaching towards them: And that what I have

of Magistrate and People.

have to say may be the more useful, I shall go on these two following Enquiries :

1. What are the proper Duties imply'd in the Text, respecting the *People*?
2. What are the Duties here more directly express'd or intended, respecting *Civil Magistrates*?
3. What are the proper Duties imply'd in the Text respecting the *People*.

The Word *Rulers* is a Relative Term, and supposes certain reciprocal Duties between the Person who rules, and those who are ruled and govern'd by him : These Duties therefore might be inferr'd from the very Character of Rulers consider'd simply as such : But when the Apostle specifies the proper Acts and Offices of those who rule; when he tells us, they are *not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil*; especially when he adds, *wilt thou not then be afraid of the Power? do that which is Good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same*: Here indeed the Duty of the People may rather be said to be directly prescribed to them, than to be deduced by necessary Implication and Consequence.

Now, as the Duty of the People is represented in general, consisting principally in the Performance of *good Works*; towards their better Information concerning the distinct and more important Parts of their Duty comprehended under this general Expression, I shall descend to instance in these Three particular Duties, as necessary, and at all times incumbent on them, by virtue of that Relation wherein they stand to their Rulers.

1. In the Duty of Obedience.

2. Of Love.

3. Of Honour.

1. One of the principal Duties incumbent on the People, which necessarily falls here under the Notion of good Works, is, that of *Obedience* to all the just and lawful Commands of their Superiors, whether express'd, or known by any secret Intimations, or upon any certain and reasonable Grounds, to be agreeable to their Will and Pleasure; but especially when such Obedience is not only, in the Nature of it, lawful, but has a tendency to promote the *common Good*, that great End which Subjects as well as Rulers ought to propose in all their Designs and Actions, whether any express Law or Command should oblige them to regulate their Conduct accordingly, or not.

There can be no Dispute concerning the Duty of obeying those who have the Rule over us in all things, whether simply innocent, or which are directly serviceable to the State; the great Difficulty seems to lie in determining the Measures of a *Passive* Obedience when such Commands are imposed on Subjects, which are either directly contrary to the Laws of the State, or to the Laws of God: Tho' indeed, considering the Laws of the State are in effect, and interpretatively, the Laws of God, (as proceeding from the Powers ordain'd and authorized, in their Legislative Capacity, by Him) all human Laws, that are just and reasonable in themselves, have by evident Construction the Force of a Divine Law: But the Question, I say, is, when the Commands of the Civil Magistrate are contrary to either or both of these Laws, how the Subject ought to conduct himself? That in all the Instances

stances of Active Obedience, where the *Illegality* of any Action is plain and evident, his Compliance is unlawful, will not be disputed; in this Case we have a Rule in Scripture (with an Appeal at the same time to the common Judgment of Mankind for the Reasonableness of it) That we *ought to hearken unto God more than unto Man*, Acts iv. 19. But then I say, the *Illegality of the Thing or Action commanded us ought to be very plain and evident*; if it be only a matter of Doubt, a certain and known Duty ought alway, on a Competition, to determine us against it: If, for Instance, Subjects are commanded to serve a Prince in a War, which, consider'd in itself, or in respect to the Motives on which the Prince engages in it, is really unlawful; yet if the Unlawfulness of it does not appear to them in a very clear and full Light, they ought notwithstanding to serve in such a War; because 'tis safer much to act according to a Rule of known and standing Obligation, (in case nothing unlawful is commanded) than to depart from such a Rule on disputable and uncertain Grounds.

This Maxim is of Use to Subjects, not only in respect to the Measures of Civil Obedience, strictly so called; but of Obedience to such Commands of Authority which have an immediate Reference to Religion.

It has been disputed, whether the Civil Power, and of late indeed, whether *any* Power upon Earth, can justly impose certain Terms or Conditions of Christian Communion, how lawful soever in themselves. But if *any Persons* are invested with such a Power, 'tis most certain, that Obedience is due, and ought to be paid to them. So that in this Case every Man is guilty of Disobedience, and justly incurs the Punishment of it, who is not as certain (which no Man ever *was*, or *can be*) that

that 'tis absolutely unlawful to *impose* such Conditions, as that Authority ought to be obey'd in all things lawful.

Were it not for this Rule, That private Doubts ought to give way to known, certain and general Duties, Men would be continually at loss how to conduct themselves with relation to their Superiors; instead of executing their Orders, which 'tis sometimes necessary should be speedily executed, they would stand continually examining the Grounds and Reasons of them, till the Execution might be too late.

This shews indeed, how careful Persons of superior Authority ought to be, that they command nothing but what is lawful; and at the same time how expedient it is for the good Government of Society, that Subjects ought to pay Obedience to such Commands the Unlawfulness whereof does not evidently appear. When it does evidently appear, it is their Duty, and especially if the Law provides no Redress, to submit with Patience to such Mulets as they may suffer in Consequence of their Disobedience, and not to make any *private* Wrongs a Pretence of giving *publick* Disturbance to the State.

2. Another Duty, which Subjects are obliged to pay their Rulers, is *Love*.

Love is indeed the most generous and powerful Principle of Obedience, and therefore the same Arguments by which we prove it necessary that Subjects should *obey*, do also, by a natural and obvious Consequence, prove it necessary, that they should *love* those who have the Rule over them; unless they are influenced by *this* Motive, whatever they do in Obedience to Authority will be more forced and constrained, if it be not done with a visible Reluctance: And on all these Accounts they will be less capable of attaining the Ends of Government,

verment, and for which they were put in a State of Subjection to it. But we have yet a more direct Proof, why Persons in Authority ought to be the Objects of the People's Love, (so far as they act, as they are here supposed to do by the Apostle, in pursuance of their Commission, and should alway indeed be *presumed* to do so where the Evidence of their Acting is not very clear and out of Question) and this Motive of Love which I mean, is founded in the Benefits which we receive from their Administration, from that of the Prince as Supreme, to that of subordinate Governors or Rulers, as pursuing the same common Good and Welfare of the State. And if it be a reasonable Inducement to us to love those who are in any Degree beneficial to us, and to *express* our Love by all proper external Testimonies of it, then it is reasonable, in Proportion as the Benefits which Subjects receive from their Rulers are greater or of wider Extent, that the Motives to love *them* should be so much the stronger, and operate in all the outward Significations of it after a more eminent and conspicuous Manner. Rulers in particular, to whose Charge whole Provinces are committed, or populous and opulent Cities, more considerable perhaps in these Two Characters than many Provinces; such Rulers, when they faithfully execute the Trust reposed in them, and act according to the Tenor of their Commission, challenge the more sensible Returns both of our Love and Gratitude for their Works sake.

I shall mention but one Argument more, why we should cherish, as much as we can, all the Motives of *Love* towards those who are invested with Authority over us; and that is from the ill Effects which will too probably follow from a Dislike, much more from a Hatred of their Persons.

As we are always inclined to judge favourably and with Candour of the Actions or Designs of those whom we *love*, and even to cover a Multitude of lesser Faults in them; we, on the other hand, suspect every thing, and are scarce pleased with any thing that is done by Persons against whom we have conceived any Prejudice or Distaste; we magnify every Failure, or what we apprehend to be so, to their Disadvantage, and even are sometimes pleased to see it terminate in their Disgrace, perhaps in their Ruin.

How necessary then is it, upon this Consideration, to the Ends of Government, that *they* under whose Government we are should have a competent Share of our Affections, and especially that *we* should never improve, never seek any Occasion, never hearken to any Insinuations, which may tend to render them the Objects either of our Hatred or Contempt? For in Proportion indeed as other Persons lessen in our Esteem, our Love towards them will gradually cool and diminish.

But this leads me to consider another Duty of the *People* towards their *Rulers*; and that is,

3. Honour, or Reverence.

This is a Duty expressly enjoined in Scripture, and is very agreeable to the common Reason and Practice of Mankind in all Ages and Countries: The most barbarous Nations, after their Way, do Honour to those intrusted with the Administration of Affairs; either by paying some external Homage to them, or by putting certain Marks of Distinction on their Persons, respecting their Habit, their Retinue, or more splendid Manner of Life.

And the Grounds on which Honour is done to the Civil Magistrate in all these respects, are very obvious. Authority can

never

never be well or long maintain'd, when separated from Esteem and Reverence; as these, if not preserved by what, after a manner proper enough, we call *Dignity*, cannot be expected to subsist for any time; especially amongst weak and vulgar Minds, on whom 'tis difficult to make any strong or lasting Impressions, but what are more immediately convey'd to them by way of the Senses: Even wise and understanding Men are very apt to be affected with outward Appearances; and while they are in the Body, and Members of a visible Society, there are in general very good Reasons of Providence why they should be so affected. " 'Tis in the Civil Government (says a most excellent Preacher on this very Occasion) as in the Offices of Religion; " which, were they stript of all the external Decencies of Worship, would not make a due Impression on the Minds of those who assist at them. But a discreet Use of proper and becoming Ceremonies renders the Service of the Church solemn and affecting; awes the Unbeliever, inspires the Sluggish, and influences even the Devout Worshipper. In like manner, the Solemnities that accompany the Magistrate add Dignity to all his Actions, and Weight to all his Words and Opinions; producing such Effects as *Job* has so elegantly described (*cap. 29.*)" and is so well worth your Reading at your Leisure.

Several other Reasons might be here given, why Civil Magistrates ought to be Honour'd and had in Reverence by the People, but the Time will not let me mention them; I shall only beg leave, before I proceed on my next general Head, to make this Practical Improvement of what has been said.

That if it be so necessary to the Preservation and Support of the Civil Government, that the Minister of it should have all proper Testimonies of Honour and Respect from the People, what can be said in Excuse of those who industriously lay hold of

every Pretence, and where they cannot find any, either substitute what they know to be false, or propagate what they don't know to be true, in order to vilify and traduce their Rulers? Evil Speaking is, in all Cases, a Crime condemn'd by Reason, and expressly by Scripture; but to speak Evil of the (Ruler or) Rulers of the People, which the Apostle expresses, (*S^t Jude*, ver. 8.) by *speaking Evil of Dignities*, enhances the Charge and Guilt of this Crime, in Proportion to the Authority of the Person against whom it is committed, and to the more general and pernicious Effects of it. So that the Rule which the Apostle lays down with respect to our ordinary Commerce with *other Men*, is more *eminently* applicable towards regulating our Conduct in reference to Persons of superior Authority in the State; *Let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking be put away from you, with all Malice.*

I have insisted pretty largely on the Duty of Persons in a State of Subjection; whereas, both the direct Import of the Text, and of the present Occasion, might seem to require that I should rather have enlarged on the Duties of the Civil Magistrate: But I have, I hope, in some measure pleaded my Excuse, from the greater and more general Necessity which the Body of the People are under of being instructed in their Duty towards Civil Authority. Yet, that I may not appear wanting to my own Duty on any Account, I shall (however incapable of so high, so nice and difficult a Point) proceed to consider next, in as short a Compass as possible,

2. What are the Duties here more directly express'd, or intended, respecting the Civil Magistrate.

It is said in express Terms, first Negatively, that Magistrates are not a Terror to Good Works, and in the next place Positively, that they are a Terror to the Evil. But there is something I con-

ceive intended, according to an usual Way of speaking in all Authors, by this *Negative* Account of the Magistrates Office, which is really *Positive*. And when Rulers are said not to be a Terror to good Works, we are to understand the Apostle as tacitly exhorting them to favour and encourage good Works; and so he explains himself in the following Part of the Verse, *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? do that which is good, and thou shalt, &c.* To this effect, and which may serve farther to illustrate the Sense of the Text, St Peter (1 Epist. ii. 14.) argues, that Magistrates are commission'd by God, for the *Punishment* of Evil Doers, and for the *Praise* of them that do well.

It is indeed so utterly inconsistent with the Character of a good Magistrate, whom the Apostle is here describing, to be a Terror to good Works, that 'tis to be hoped there are very few, even of such wicked Magistrates, who have so little Regard, either to the Origine or Ends of their Office, that this Character can be, in any eminent Degree, applicable to them; and therefore I shall rather consider the Words, as importing an Exhortation to Rulers *directly* to favour and encourage good Works. For tho' 'tis reasonable, in respect to the Life that *now* is, that Men should, in *all* Cases, discharge their Duty, from a natural Consciousness of their Obligations to it, and the natural Tendency which a faithful Discharge of it has, *at present*, to promote their Happiness (setting aside all Considerations of present Rewards or Punishments;) yet, as we do not alway consult or follow Reason, it must be acknowledged these additional Motives are very strong, sometimes the *strongest* of all others to enforce the Practice of our Duty, and whereby a great Part of Mankind are most powerfully influenced: As it is therefore the most proper Business of Rulers to keep Subjects to the Measures, and within the Bounds of their Duty, as their Countenance, or their special Favour and Protection to those that do well are necessary

to this End; they are Duties certainly incumbent on them, and which evidently arise from the very Nature and Design of their Office.

The Question is, What Works they are, which the Apostle may here be supposed principally to mean? For tho' all the Instances of our Duty do properly fall under the general Notion of good Works, yet as the Apostle is here prescribing the Duty of Civil Magistrates, we are, in a special Manner, to understand, in this Place, such Works as have a more immediate Relation to Civil Government, and on the Performance of which the Peace, Happiness, Prosperity, and Glory of it do more visibly depend.

Upon this View then, Men of strict Virtue and Probity ought to be the peculiar Objects of the Magistrate's Favour; both as a Religious Conduct has a direct Tendency in itself to promote these Ends, and from the Influence of a good Example, upon other Men; and as Religion does also, on a providential Account, contribute, in these several respects, to *exalt a Nation*, by deriving the special Blessing of God upon it: Yet if Men of loose Principles, and corrupt Morals, are not generally favour'd, it is not deny'd but there may be certain extraordinary Cases, wherein Persons of *this* Character may have some reasonable Pretensions to publick Favour. As where they have done any eminent or remarkable Service to the State, where they are greatly distinguish'd for their Martial or Political Abilities, and a known inviolable Zeal for the Service of the Government; or where they have made any important Discoveries towards advancing the Trade and Wealth, or preserving the Peace and Honour of it.

But then we say, Rewards of this Kind ought to be distributed with the greatest Caution, and to very particular Services only. Where wicked Men are, on any Pretence, made the ge-

neral and peculiar Objects of Favour, and perhaps on no other Merit but because they strike into Duty, with some little Party-Interest, or mutable Scheme, neither of which, after a few days, may probably subsist, or be heard of any more: This is a Method of Corruption, to say nothing of the great Scandal it brings on Religion, especially in a Christian State, which a Good Cause can never stand in need of, and by which a Bad one can certainly be never long supported.

But this being only a Case put on a Supposition, for which, 'tis hoped, there are so seldom, if ever, any just Grounds in well constituted Governments (and in that particularly under which we live) I shall not insist any farther on so disagreeable a Subject, but proceed to consider in the next place,

2. Another Branch of the Civil Magistrate's Duty, as it relates to the Punishment of Delinquents, or the Right which he has to Punish; as Rulers are here represented, by the Apostle, *a Terror to Evil Works.*

The Necessity of inflicting exemplary Punishment on Criminals in the State, is so evident, that without a Power in the Civil Magistrate to this End, neither the publick Peace, nor the Rights of private Men could be any longer preserved. But all the States of the World would become, in a very short time, no better than one large Common-wealth of Cannibals, (if a Multitude of Men may be called so) and among whom there would be no such thing as any common Interest.

However, as all Penal Laws are made, not directly with an Intention of Punishment, but rather with a Design to *prevent* Punishment, by terrifying Men from offending against them; Temper and Moderation, in executing this Power of the Civil Magistrate, are very commendable and Christian Duties: So that in many Cases which admitt of favourable Allowances and

Constructions, and where they may legally punish, yet Equity, and perhaps Prudence will direct them to suspend their Right of punishing their Fellow-Creatures, especially when they consider that they are Men of like Passions with themselves, and how, under the like Circumstances, on a supposed Change of their own with them, *they also might have been tempted.*

Besides, as the Love of the People is the Principal Support of the State, and without which, notwithstanding all other Engines of Power or Art, 'twill be in great Danger of sinking; and as Acts of Mercy, Clemency, and Indulgence, where there is any Room for them, are the principal Means of conciliating and preserving the People's Love, the Magistrate (as I insinuated) will sometimes think fit to wave his Right of punishing on Reasons of Civil Prudence; but never proceed to too strict or inhumane Executions, tho' such possibly for which he would not render himself accountable to the Laws, or obnoxious to any other Power; yet I am far from designing such a Relaxation of *punitive* Justice, as may tend to endanger the State: I choose rather to call it so than *vindictive* Justice; for which Divines have thought there is, in a strict Sense, no just solid Foundation; either in the proper Exercise of human Government itself, (Punishments being only in the way of exemplary and medicinal Chastisements) or, as we commonly say, *in Terrorem*, and agreeable to the Character which the Apostle here gives of Civil Rulers, "That they are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil." But as the strongest Threats, if not sometimes executed, will, by Degrees, lose their Force, and wicked Men *will* take Occasion, from their Impunity, still to encourage themselves in Wickedness, it becomes necessary to the Safety of Government, that Penal Laws should frequently be put in Execution, especially against obstinate, old, and insolent Offenders; and in large populous Cities, where both the Temp-

tations to some Crimes are more numerous and pressing, and the Arts of committing them, at the same time, more improved.

Having, I fear, in prosecuting my two general Heads, enlarged too far already, I shall only beg leave to conclude with one useful Observation from the Text, and a short Improvement of it.

What I would observe is, That the Apostle here speaking of Civil Magistrates, represents them rather under their general Character, and according to the Manner wherein Subjects ought to think and speak of them, than according to their personal Qualifications; *Rulers, says he, are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil.* He describes them as keeping faithfully to their Commission, and acting in pursuance of the Powers given them by God; tho' it is certain the Rulers then in being did not act so: They were the *Roman* Emperors and Deputies who govern'd, in many respects, after an unjust, tyrannical, and arbitrary Manner. If so great Caution was used by the Apostle, in speaking of such Rulers, whose Tyranny, and Mal-Administration, were so flagrant and notorious; if he chose rather to consider the Ends for which they received their Powers, than any particular Abuses of it: This may serve as an excellent Rule to shew us, how cautious we ought to be in making a Judgment, whether concerning the Conduct, or the secret Springs of it, in our Civil Governors, and especially in speaking of them, on any Account, after an injurious and detracting Manner, or which may give ill Impressions to others, concerning them. We should rather, in Imitation of the Apostle's Example, choose to cover their Failures, (if perhaps they are guilty of any) and to view their Actions on the brighter Side: In a word, we should consider them as they are here consider'd in the Text, rather as they *ought* to be, than as they

And yet the Case is very different under the Administration of Rulers, when the Laws are duly executed, when Justice has its ordinary Course, and runs in a smooth and open Channel; when every Man *sits under his own Vine, and his own Fig-Tree*, (Mich. iv. 4.) when there is no Arbitrary *leading into Captivity, or Complaining in our Streets*; this Case, I say, is very different from that of the People who liv'd under the Roman Governors, at the time when St Paul wrote this Epistle, and therefore may be very properly urged as an additional and moving Argument, not only to caution us against that atrocious, but God knows too common Crime of Evil-speaking against those who have the Rule over us: But to shew how much 'tis our Duty, both to think and speak of them after the most honorary and respectful Manner; as also to offer up our united *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks for them*; That *we, together with them, may lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty.* Amen.



F P N I S.